

Every Child Learning Every Day



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READY TO LEARN

Books for June

By Dr. Stan Steiner

The end of the school year signifies the onslaught of summer. Below are books to make the transition and ways to stay safe.

"**Super Oscar**," by Oscar De La Hoya and illustrated by Lisa Kopelke, 2006, Simon & Schuster. Olympic boxing champion Oscar De La Hoya talks about his childhood. Dreaming about his future and staying active were part of growing up in a community where neighbors gathered weekly to play and share meals together.



"**Once Upon a Dragon: Stranger Safety for Kids (and Dragons)**," by Jean E. Pendziwol, and illustrated by Martine Gourbault, 2006, Kids Can Press. Parents, teachers and care providers need a comfortable way to talk to kids about strangers.

This clever book combines folktales with realistic situations to help children make wise decisions about encounters with strangers.

"**A Place for Butterflies**," by Melissa Stewart and illustrated by Higgins Bond, 2006, Peachtree.

Melissa Stewart's excellent information, adorned with Higgins Bond's lifelike illustrations, features 12 beautiful butterflies across the United States. Included are maps depicting their habitat range.

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Take time to visit your local library this summer

Dear Reader:

Summer is a great time to start (or continue) a family reading habit and you'll find some great resources to help you at your local library.

Each summer the Idaho State Library helps coordinate a state-wide summer reading effort. This year the theme is "Paws, Claws, Scales, and Tales" for young children and "Creature Feature" for teens.

School-aged children will enjoy programs that reward them for reaching reading goals. It is a good time for parents of pre-schoolers to set some goals, too.

If you are a first-time parent, aim to read with your child every day. Your local librarian can offer some good titles for you to read together.



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

The folks at the National Education Association also offer some great tips for getting started:

* Snuggle with your child

with her favorite blanket or toys as you read.

* Read with expression, using different voices for different characters.

* Emphasize rhythms and rhymes in stories. Give your toddler opportunities to repeat rhyming phrases.

* Look for books that are about things that interest your toddler. For example, does your child like cars, insects or animals?

* Read stories again and again. Your toddler enjoys repetition, and it helps her become familiar with the way stories are organized.

If you'd like to learn more tips about reading with your young child visit: <http://www.nea.org/parents/readingpre.html>

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Get children started with traveling skills

Physical Education (P.E.) Central is a website (www.pecentral.org) where educators and others share lesson plans for activities aimed at different age groups.

Below is a preschool activity from that site.

Name of activity

Getting started with traveling

Purpose of activity

The purpose of this activity is to introduce the basic traveling skills of walking, marching, galloping, and skipping to pre-school children while helping them to understand the concept of general space.

Activity cues

Swing arms for walking, lift knees high for marching, one foot leads and the other follows for galloping, and hop on one

foot then hop on the other for skipping.

Materials needed

This activity requires a large open space, free of any obstacles.

Description

The idea behind this activity is to help children feel comfortable as they move in a large space with other children and to introduce basic traveling skills. Start by asking children to begin walking throughout the space. As they walk ask that they stay far away from their friends and swing their arms.

Continue with other traveling skills, asking children to march by raising their knees as high as they can, to gallop by stepping on the front foot and bringing the rear foot up to follow, and skipping by

alternating hopping one time on one foot and then on the other.

Allow 45 to 60 seconds for children to practice each skill before moving to the next and then repeat each skill several times during the activity. Add other skills such as crawling, hopping and sliding as children are ready.

Teaching suggestions

In the beginning there will be bumping as children will be more excited about practicing the traveling skills then watching where they are going. Teachers may want to initially instruct children to walk with their arms straight out to the side, asking that they stay an arm's-length from their classmates.



PARENT TIPS

Tips to help kids get a good night's sleep

Kids need plenty of sleep to rest their growing bodies and minds, especially as they head into the teen years. When kids don't get enough sleep, it can zap their moods, their school performance, and the amount of energy they have to play.

But a new KidsHealth® KidsPoll shows that kids aren't getting enough sleep, and that even if they resist bedtime, they want some zzzs!

Here are some things you can do to help your child get a good night's sleep:

Make a bedtime routine and stick to it. Kids tend to resist going to bed, so it's important to establish a time for sleep and stick to it. If you enforce bedtime sporadically, your child will know that you're open to letting bedtime slide and will be likely to keep fighting it.

Help your child to set up a bedtime routine that includes soothing activities — like reading, doing some stretching exercises, or taking a bath or shower — that will begin the process of slowing down in preparation to sleep. It will also help your child get in the mood to rest.

About 30 minutes before bedtime, give your child a heads-up that it will soon be time to finish any activities.

Make sure your child has a healthy setting for sleep. Your child should have a place to sleep that's cozy and conducive to snoozing. Make sure that your child's bed is comfortable and the bedroom isn't too hot or cold.

The room should be dark, but it's a good idea to have a nightlight if your child needs to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. Keep temptations like TV or video games out of your child's room.

Head off bedtime troubles during the day. You can do things during the day to help your child get to bed at a decent time and get a good night's sleep:

Make sure your child has had some vigorous exercise during the day. Sixty minutes per day is recommended.

NUTRITION

Young children love picnics, so plan a safe one

Picnics are a fun thing to do with family and friends, especially when it is warm outside.

There are a lot of different foods that you can take on a picnic that your young children will enjoy. Fruits and vegetables are easy things to take along. Dried fruit, juice boxes, and nuts are easy foods to pack and take with you on a picnic. Foods that you and your family would want to put in a cooler are salads that have

meat or dressing in them, cheeses like string cheese, pudding, and meats and eggs. If you cook something, such as baked beans, be sure to eat it within one or two hours of cooking unless you're going to pack it in a cooler and heat it up again when you get to the picnic site.

Be sure to bring paper plates; plastic spoons, forks, and knives; napkins; and soap to wash your hands before and after your picnic.

A good and easy picnic menu could include: turkey sandwiches, bananas, carrot sticks, brownies for dessert, and fruit juice or milk boxes. All of these foods can be packed in the cooler. Also be sure to bring something to play with after you eat. You could bring a Frisbee, ball, or even your family dog. Young children love picnics even in the yard at home, but mostly they love to run and play after the picnic.

SMART STARTS

Listening, responding are fundamental skills

Listening and responding skills are important to succeed in society. Children need practice with both skills so they can become effective communicators. Language skills are fundamental in building strong skills in other areas of development.

Birth to 1 year: Reading to your child during the first year of life will help your child listen to language and understand the purpose and function of language. Begin naming familiar objects around the house. Repetition of naming and seeing objects will reinforce language skills.

1 to 3 years old: At this point

in children's development they are able to point out objects that are familiar to them and choose favorite books. Read and reread their favorite books. You can also begin to point out familiar objects from home but in new environments, such as a friend's dog or cat.

3 to 5 years old: Children at this age are beginning to understand prepositions (under/over/through). You can practice using these words by creating an obstacle course in your home with chairs, blankets, boxes, etc. Give directions: "Now go through the cardboard box." This will also require them to use their

listening skills and practice following multi-step directions.

Skills needed for kindergarten: Children need a variety of language skills in school to guide them through each day. Knowing when and how to use language will help them listen and follow the directions and rules of the classroom.

Books and other resources: "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" by Dr. Seuss.

ACTIVITY

Cord project showcases child's treasures

By Jennifer Williams

2002 Idaho Teacher of the Year

It is amazing how many wonderful little treasures your preschooler seems to accumulate throughout the year. Projects from a day at grandma's, leftovers from a birthday celebration, souvenirs from a trip to the zoo, trinkets from a Happy Meal™, broken Christmas toys or daycare projects, can all be found to create "treasure cords."

Supplies: Sturdy cord, yarn, or string; large plastic needles from a fabric store

Miscellaneous items from a bedroom, toy room, or garage, including: wooden beads or spools, cookie cutters, paper plates and cups, draw-

ings, art projects, broken pieces of toys or jewelry, plastic prizes, paper clips, shoe laces, cardboard tubes, styrofoam "popcorn," straws, buttons, cardboard pieces or egg cartons, foil and construction paper scraps, puzzle pieces or anything that can be hole-punched.

Tree or fence for hanging treasure cords

Procedure: Cut the cord to desired lengths up to 6' long. Tie a knot in one end of the cord to keep items from coming off. Thread the opposite end through the plastic needle.

Collect items to be strung. Sort and string them from large to small, fat to thin, by color, or in a particular

pattern or theme.

String as many cords as desired. Hang the finished pieces from a tree limb in the yard, or along a fence line.

These can be placed where curious birds or squirrels might find and use them for nesting materials.

Observe how they sway or take flight in the wind.

Talk about their changes over time.

Use them as an excuse to get rid of excess items around the house. Smaller versions can be made into necklaces, bracelets, belts, or decorative wall hangings.